DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 228 747 EA 015 601

TITLE	The Role of a Consultant in a Superintendency Search. Superintendent Career Development Series No. 7.
INSTITUTION	American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Va.
PUB DATE	83
NOTE	34p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications, American Association of School Administrators, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209 (Stock No. 21-00822; $3.50; quantity discounts).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Selection; *Board of Education Role; *Consultants; Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; *Superintendents
IDENTIFIERS	Consultant Role

ABSTRACT

To clarify the role of the consultant in the search for and selection of a superintendent, this manual explains the obligations and expectations of boards, consultants, and applicants in the search and selection process and provides standards for hiring a consultant. School boards are provided guidelines for evaluating consultants' proposals and for drawing up the consultant's contract. The booklet sets out 10 items that a board can expect of a consultant, including contacting qualified applicants, charging reasonable fees, assessing and screening applicants, advising the board on interviewing and selecting finalists, maintaining the confidentiality of the search, preserving objectivity in screening, reporting on the progress of the search, counseling the board after a candidate is hired, and helping to maintain good public relations. Advice is included as well on the three products that boards should not expect of consultants: magic, a guarantee of success, and major decisions. (JW)

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The Role of a Consultant in a Superintendency Search

EA 015 601

The Role of a Consultant in a Superintendency Search

Prepared for
The American Association of
School Administrators

Reviewed and Approved by the
Committee for the Advancement
of School Administration (CASA)

Published by the American Association of
School Administrators, 1801 North Moore
Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209

Superintendent Career Development Series:

Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators

Selecting a Superintendent

The Superintendent's Contract

Compensating the Superintendent (Summary Report)

Compensating the Superintendent (Full Report)

The Administrative Leadership Team

Evaluating the Superintendent

The Role of a Consultant in a Superintendency Search

Administrative Team Career Development Series:

Selecting the Administrative Team

The Board's Role in Selecting the Administrative Team

Compensating the Administrative Team (Summary Report)

Compensating the Administrative Team (Full Report)

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Stock Number: 21-00822
Library of Congress Card Catalogue Number: 83-070195

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Foreword

One of the greatest challenges facing any school board is the selection of a superintendent. It is the most important . . . most crucial decision a board is called upon to make.

With increasing frequency, school boards are turning to professional consultants to assist them in their search for the right chief executive officer for their school system. A professional consultant might have a great deal to offer in assisting with that search. However, the stakes are high both for the school district and the candidate. That's why AASA's Committee for the Advancement of School Administration (CASA) commissioned this publication. *The Role of a Consultant* does not replace the AASA publication, *Selecting a Superintendent*, or any other books in the "Superintendent Career Development Series." However, it does expand on that series and focus on another important factor that can have a profound impact on a school administrator's career.

The original manuscript for this publication was prepared by the late Robert Wilson of Kent State University, himself an experienced consultant. The advice of several other leading consultants was sought as the publication took shape.

Naturally, candidates for administrator positions are concerned about the process used by consultants as they gather applications, screen and make recommendations to school boards. Those concerns include:

- Do consultants work from "their list" and make the process of getting on that list extremely difficult? Neither boards nor potential candidates would be well served by such a narrow, exclusive view.

- Are some candidates left off the final lists because they have been dismissed from a previous position? The administrator may have been upholding sound principles and may have been dismissed because of a commitment to them. Consultants should not engage in blackballing. Upholding a principle could be a mark in favor of the candidate.

• Do some organizations that engage in superintendency searches only recommend their own members? Are they closed to suggestions for improvement? Do they engage in blackballing or develop closed lists that are exclusive? Of course, if the organization is legitimate, the answers to all these questions should be "no."

• Are some potential administrators left out because the consultant simply "doesn't know them?" If this is the case, then the chances for "new talent" to enter the field may be limited.

• Does the consultant use "business standards" in selecting the school administrator? There is great doubt that only standards used for businesses will lead to the best candidate since the chief executive officer of a school system must be both an administrator and an educational leader. While some criteria may be similar, the superintendency is unique. High sounding claims of "using business standards" may be a cause for caution in selecting a consultant.

These cautions are just that . . . cautions. A search consultant can offer valuable assistance for the school board in seeking the superintendent who will provide educational leadership for the community. However, standards are needed in selecting and making the best use of the professional search consultant. This book provides some of those standards.

Paul B. Salmon

Paul B. Salmon, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Introduction

The Consultant: Benefits and Drawbacks

With increasing frequency school boards are engaging professional consultants to assist them in choosing a new superintendent of schools. That challenge is commonly considered the single most important responsibility a board faces. The trend is not surprising when it is remembered that hiring a superintendent is a specialized task. Citizen board members may be quite competent in making employment decisions in their respective occupations but often feel inadequate in assessing potential among candidates for the superintendency. They may have difficulty in determining the kind of person they should be seeking and are unsure about where or how to conduct the search.

As the average length of a board member's tenure declines, choosing a superintendent is likely to occur only once during a member's time on the board. With shorter tenure, it is less likely that board members will have experience in seeking the "right" superintendent of schools. That's when the consultant comes in. However, the expenditure for a competent consultant can be the most productive investment of the search or it can be a wasteful exercise.

When a board feels a need for a consultant to assist in the search, it is confronted with another important challenge . . . how to choose a reliable consultant from those available. Some board members feel uncomfortable working with a search specialist, since they are uncertain about "who does what." Other board members, and superintendents, report unfortunate experiences with executive search consultants. Hence, the need for this publication which is designed to be a *"should and should not"* booklet for *the three parties involved in a board-consultant search for a superintendent: the local school board,* the *job applicants,* and *the consultant.* It is meant to help all parties understand their roles, expectations, and obligations in the procedure.

Chapter 1

Selecting a Consultant . . . The Steps

A school board considering the use of consulting help in its search for a chief school executive should approach the selection in a manner similar to the way it normally employs any outside specialist (architect, major contractor, lawyer, or even the superintendent). The board should thoroughly investigate all of those interested in doing the search. When satisfied that it has found the best, the board might then enter into a contractual relationship. This procedure can be accomplished as follows:

Names of possible consultants can be obtained from the state and national offices of either the superintendents' or boards' professional organizations. Both have vehicles to help publicize the vacancy. Neighboring districts that have used consultants can also be a valuable source of leads in locating qualified consultants.

Seek Written Proposals . . .

The board must then take the initiative in requesting that several consultants submit written proposals for serving as a superintendent search consultant for the district. The bid proposal should include:

- Step-by-step procedure the consultant would use for the search.
- Complete estimate of fees and expenses.
- Names of school districts where the consultant has previously provided consulting services. (A telephone call to some or all of

those districts will suffice to get an assessment of the consultant's effectiveness.)

- Personal/professional vita of the consultant.

The board should then meet with perhaps two or three of the most promising consultants to discuss in detail plans for the search. This procedure can be helpful since the choice should be a mutual decision; both parties must be willing to work with each other. What qualities should boards and consultants be seeking in each other? This publication presents some thoughts for your consideration.

Draw Up Contract. . .

When the board agrees on a consultant, a formal contract between the two should be drawn up. That contract must be compatible with statutory contract provisions and include at least these three elements:

- What each party will do.
- Time schedule of performance.
- Fees, expenses and payment schedule.

In the beginning, the board should decide whether to use just one consultant or a consulting team. There are some distinct advantages to the team approach, and it may not cost any more than employing a single consultant. Some consultants from universities insist on a team that includes colleagues from other institutions in order to remove the temptation, or allegation, of a university bias in the screening stage. A team might be expected to bring more knowledge and objectivity to the screening. Team members can provide varied interests and experiences as well as diverse contacts. Further, a team

which is spread over a wider geographic area can shorten the time required for "checking out" applicants.

In some cases the cost of retaining three consultants may not exceed the cost of employing one. A common strategy is for a board to contract with just one "chief consultant" with the understanding that he or she will manage the search aided by co-consultants chosen either by the chief consultant or the board.

Chapter 2

What the Board Can Expect of a Consultant

Consultants used for selection of a superintendent must reflect the highest forms of professionalism. A code of ethics should be a vital part of the understanding between the board and its consultants. Issues of justice, fairness, non-discrimination, honesty, straightforwardness, and openness should be on the minds of the consultants as well as the employing school board.

The employing board of education may expect the following from the consultant:

Assistance in Developing Criteria

1. *Assistance in developing criteria describing the new superintendent*—The board, generally with input from citizens, staff, and students, should determine what qualities it wants in a new superintendent. The consultant can advise the board on statutory specifications, certification, special skills needed for the particular position, recommended salary and contract conditions.

Since board members may have differences of opinion about desired criteria, and since it is unlikely applicants will satisfy all the qualifications in equal proportions, a helpful technique is to classify the criteria as follows:

- *Absolutes* (minimum requirements upon which there is unanimous agreement among board members)
- *Desired qualities but not absolutes*
- *Qualities desired by more than one member but not majority*

• *Characteristics of no importance to this board*

Soliciting the views of representative community and employee groups in a systematic manner is not only an effective way for getting a wider sampling of the qualifications needed but also a desirable public relations strategy for involving more people in the selection process. The consultant might wish to sit in on these interview sessions. Better yet, he or she might conduct the group interviews alone in order to get a first-hand feel for the problems a new superintendent will have to face.

Reasonable Fees and Expenses

2. *Reasonable fees and expenses*—The fees a consultant may charge for this specialized service range from merely out-of-pocket expenses to an amount in excess of what many school districts can afford or are willing to pay. Fees are related to the consultant's experience, the proximity of the school district to the consultant's home base, the extent of his or her time involvement in the total search, the prevailing consulting rates for that region of the country, the size and wealth of the school district, and sometimes to a consulting firm's standard practice. The variations make it desirable for a board to seek bid proposals from several consultants. That does not mean the consultancy will necessarily go to the lowest bidder. Clues about the "right" amount may be obtained from contacts with those boards in those districts where the consultant has previously served and from other boards that have recently employed a consultant.

Consultants usually estimate their fees on

a per diem basis, indicating how many days will be devoted to each phase of the search and to the total search. Often the estimate will not include travel expenses, since travel costs may be affected by industry price fluctuations. Many consultants prefer a "cost plus" travel/expense contract. This arrangement enables the consultant to show a truer picture of what the service costs. At the same time it causes the school board to use judgment in requesting on-site visits by the consultant. In any case, it is important to quote a maximum cost figure, especially in those states where it is not legal for a board to enter into a "sliding scale" or "cost over-run" contract.

Contacting appropriate sources for candidates

3. *Contacting appropriate sources for candidates*—While the placement centers of universities with superintendent preparation programs constitute the major source for candidates, the consultant may not wish to contact all of them, nationwide, unless the aim is to impress the board with quantity of applicants. Variables of distance, salary range, and scope of advanced preparatory programs will influence the responses from various placement offices.

Publicity through professional administration journals and organizations will yield some results, usually better than newspaper ads. Many schools districts produce attractive, informative brochures explaining the position and providing insights into the community. While these need not be expensive or ostentatious, they should convey a sense of importance. Also an experienced consultant who stays attuned with practic-

ing administrators can approach some candidates directly. However, the search for candidates must be diverse. It should not be restricted to the administrators that the consultant knows well.

Candidates should not be asked to complete an exhaustive application form, especially if it elicits information which may be found in the university credentials. At most, a brief update of data, or perhaps a one- or two-page form which calls for information not normally appearing in placement office papers is all that busy executives should be asked to submit.

Assessing and Screening Applicants

4. *Assessing and screening applicants in accordance with board specifications*—As obvious as this expectation may appear, and despite the improbability of finding nominees who satisfy perfectly all criteria, a board has the right to expect the consultant to use its specifications in the screening process. Boards should beware of the search consultant who builds a pool of superintendents to be placed somewhere regardless of local criteria. This constitutes one more argument in favor of a consulting team in lieu of just one person or one agency.

Consultants have obligations to check the credentials of nominees thoroughly. The status of a candidate's certification should be determined and described accurately. Details about the present role of nominees also should be explored comprehensively. Salary information is useful. So is data on candidate availability.

The number of finalists to be recommended

for initial interviews is determined by the board. In practice, the number is usually reduced to five or six, but novice boards, or split boards, often want to interview more. If a board must interview many candidates, there is reason to suspect that the consultant hasn't effectively pared the initial list.

School boards should expect that the consultant will adequately investigate all applicants, especialy the finalists. Demographic data can be verified easily. Not so easy to verify are the important intangibles which may not be clear from credentials and written recommendations. In this situation, the competency of a consultant is put to the test. A capable consultant has built reliable contacts over time which enable him or her to obtain quickly from around the country sound judgments about a candidate's personality traits, habits, operational style with staff, students, and citizens, the person's values, successes and failures.

Board members are prone to put excessive faith in the interview when appraising applicants. Although interviews are necessary to clarify certain aspects of the applicant's credentials, they are likely to be the least valuable step for the untrained interviewer. Therefore, the prior investigation by a knowledgeable, objective consultant promises to be a most valuable step.

A recommended criterion for "screening down" to the finalists is couched in this statement sometimes used by consultants in communication with a school board: "Although no two of these finalists are the same, nor do they function identically, they

are all excellent candidates." A consultant who has checked out the best candidates to that extent can sleep well when the job is done. Unless the board has an agonizing struggle in reducing the list of finalists to one person, the consultant has probably not done a good job. In the best situation, the consultant will offer demographic diversity among the finalists. That diversity will extend to age, sex, race, degree and locale of training to give the board latitude in making its final choice.

Boards should be alerted to the covert and unethical practice occasionally used by a consultant who "stacks the deck" in screening to the final candidates he or she recommends. An example might be nominating only one outstanding candidate and five who obviously don't measure up.

Advice and Plan for Interviewing and Appraising Finalists

5. *Advice and a plan for interviewing and appraising finalists*—While the consultant will not often be involved directly in either the board's interview or evaluation of finalists, most boards will want some counsel on both processes. The consultant, using his or her background in education, evaluation, personnel administration, and school management can be expected to offer considerable assistance with the following:

- Suggestions about the optimal setting for interviews;
- Suggestions about the type of questions that elicit the most beneficial responses;
- Cautions, pitfalls, and strategies in interviewing;

- An evaluation form and techniques including an objective rating procedure;
- Help in preparing board members to visit communities where finalists are currently serving.

Whether the board should personally investigate the finalists in their current assignment depends upon available time and money, confidence in the consultant, and the board's skill in handling such investigations discretely.

Confidentiality

6. *Confidentiality*—The school superintendency is a public office. Therefore, publicity may cause embarrassment for the superintendent who is considering a move from one community to another. The school board and its chief executive resemble other governing bodies and their top officers in our society, public and private, but they are not identical either because of legal prescriptions or practices. Therefore, advance publicity about candidates should be restricted or handled with the greatest discretion. However, in some states, "sunshine" statutes might require it. For the sake of confidentiality, no one but the school board should be involved in final decision making.

Any media releases about the selection proceedings should come from the head of the search committee with the assistance of appropriate school personnel, not the consultant. However, the consultant might be of help in preparing the releases.

School boards should be strongly advised by the consultant about the possible costly consequences of the media making indepen-

dent, investigative contracts in the home communities of the finalists. This situation is particularly critical when and if applicants have been given assurance that the confidentiality of their candidates will be maintained. It is not uncommon for some finalists to withdraw, in the final stages of the search, when investigative media people make contacts in applicants' home communities. While there is no absolute way to prevent media initiatives of this kind, the board president (et al) may wish to contact key media people, at the outset of the search, and agree on "ground rules" for handling media relations during the entire search. If there is no way to avoid media investigative contacts in finalists' home communities, prior to the final selection, then applicants should be aware of this possibility at the beginning of the search.

Objectivity

7. *Objectivity*—Objectivity by a consultant is of prime importance, but in its present form, is difficult to achieve. A consultant cannot readily abandon the loyalties which any person builds: to an institution, to friends, to philosophical beliefs or biases. Yet, a consultant must lay these loyalties aside, at least temporarily, to be of greatest service in aiding a school board. To achieve impartiality in the screening process a consultant should remember that the consulting agreement makes him or her an employee of the board. Therefore, first loyalty should be to the board until the mission is accomplished.

Reporting to the Board

8. *Reporting to board on total search actions*—A final expectation in the consulting

procedure is the report to the board of the major activities performed by the consultant. The report should include these items:

- Sources contacted and their responses.
- Statistics on applicants classified in a manner that would be informative to board members.
- A review of established criteria.
- Screening procedures.

Prepared in a professional manner, the final report constitutes a valuable source of information for the board.

Remaining in Stand-by Advisory Role

9. *Remaining in stand-by advisory role until new superintendent is officially appointed*—The work of the consultant is terminated when the list of recommended finalists, with all the collected information about each, is turned over to the board for interviewing and a decision. However, the consultant should stand by for possible further counseling until the new superintendent is officially employed. The board may need help on legal matters, questions of ethics, and proprieties related to bringing a new superintendent on board. Occasionally, a board cannot agree on a single nominee and will need more information, advice, or even additional nominations. Some consultants like to have a "second team" of finalists for just such a possibility.

All must understand from the start that the consultant's services are not finished until the superintendent is appointed, or until the two parties agree to end their contractual relationship. Final payment for services should

not be expected until termination of the contract unless otherwise specified in the agreement. However, in a long process with many expenses one or more partial payments might be reasonable.

Taking Some Heat Off the Board

10. *Taking some heat off the board*—The decision about such a vital and sought-after post as the school superintendency will typically evoke considerable pressure on board members from a variety of sources: citizens, staff, special interest groups, and even applicants—especially if there are local candidates. Whatever the final decision, it will kindle some disappointment, criticism, and perhaps extended bitterness toward the board. The consultant, who is not part of the operation of the school district should be expected to relieve the board from some of the unpleasantness.

Chapter 3

What the Board Cannot Expect from the Consultant

The board of education should *not* expect these three items from a consultant:

Magic

1. *Magic*—A sense of awe about consultants still prevails in the American working world. A belief that the outside expert will inevitably make better decisions than on-site personnel, whatever the local problems might be.

Boards should understand that there is nothing magical about the work of a professional consultant. The board can, and in some cases probably would, go through approximately the same steps in conducting a search without a consultant. The consultant merely completes the steps with:

- More efficiency, because of having done it many times;
- More reliability, because of dependable contacts he or she has cultivated over the years;
- More accuracy, because of his or her specialized knowledge of a specialized occupation—the superintendency of schools; and
- More independent judgment, because board members may be too close to the action.

But no magic!

100% Warranty of Success

2. *100% Warranty of Success*—Despite the advantages a competent consultant has over a board in successfully matching prospective

superintendents with a particular school district, there are too many unknowns and uncontrollables associated with an often ill-defined and misunderstood position in a public setting to be 100% certain that any finalist will succeed in a particular job. Even if the initial match is perfect, changing events and changing board membership can lead to less than perfect performance.

Regardless of the strategy used in the search, the decision eventually comes down to human judgment—an imperfect resource. All a board can hope for in the employment of a capable research consultant is to improve the odds for making a good judgment.

Consultant to Make Major Decisions

3. *Consultant to make major decisions*—Too often boards and consultants confuse their respective decision-making roles in a superintendency search to the extent that they, as well as onlookers, believe the consultant hires the superintendent. All persons involved need to be reminded that the board makes these critical decisions:

- whether to engage a consultant, and if so, which one;
- criteria for the new superintendent; and
- which of the finalists will be the superintendent

The consultant does *not* hire the superintendent. He or she should not even rank the finalists as is often requested by the board.

Chapter 4

What Applicants Expect of the Consultant

Objectivity

1. *Objectivity*—Applicants hope for the same fair evaluations by the consultant that the school board expects. All that most applicants want from the consultant is an impartial assessment in the screening. Each knows that, upon making it to the interview, it is up to the applicant to sell himself to the board. The concept of "fair employment practices" embraces more than simply conducting a "national" search in name only for a superintendent. A consultant who uses "fair employment practices" sets aside his or her own personal biases such as sex, demographics, or personality, and remains objective in presenting candidate assessments to the board.

Confidentiality

2. *Confidentiality*—in the treatment of job candidacy is as vital for applicants as for the board. An applicant has the right to expect that the consultant will be sensitive to this need to keep the candidacy in confidence. The consultant must also resist the subtle or overt request of candidates to identify the other applicants.

Adequate Information

3. *Adequate information about the board, school system, and the community in order to make the initial decision to apply*—It is the candidate's responsibility to research the vacancy enough to make the final decision, but the consultant should supply sufficient data for a candidate to make the initial decision to become an applicant. Much of

the essential information will appear in the formal vacancy announcement, but a serious contender will need more information just to decide if the post is worth pursuing. Data not normally included in the published announcement, but of interest might include the following:

- The nature of the board and community (the bad and the good).
- What happened to the previous superintendent?
- What has been the history of superintendent longevity in the district?
- Local candidates for the position.
- If the search is a wide open race or merely a charade?
- The most difficult problems to be faced by new superintendent.
- The best estimate of salary and fringes for which the board will eventually settle.
- If finalists are to be interviewed by citizen committees and what the ground rules will be.

To Be Kept Informed

4. *To be kept informed of search progress*—Probably the most agonizing concern of applicants is expressed in the simple question, "Am I still in the running?" As liaison between candidates and the board, the consultant can be expected to keep both parties appraised of progress. At the very minimum, a formal notice should go to all non-finalists when they are screened from further consideration. The board president may have to keep finalists informed of

progress after interviews have started.

Keeping informed of progress is a two-way street. The consultant needs to keep updated on the applicants' continued interest in the vacancy. If adequate time has been allowed for a complete search, many possible developments could change an applicant's aspirations from the time of initial interest to eventual interview. A consultant should not squander anyone's time or money if there is no hope that a particular applicant will be hired, or if the applicant will not likely accept the post, if offered.

Reasons for Being Screened Out

5. *Reasons for being screened out*—While it is unreasonable to expect a consultant to explain to all applicants why each has been screened out, except in a very general way, he or she should be prepared to respond to some inquiries from candidates. Further, the consultant can be instructionally helpful to the unsuccessful finalists in their future interviews by explaining why the board did not choose them—if known.

Chapter 5

Consultant's Expectations

A consultant should expect the following:

Integrity

1. *Integrity—from board and applicants—* This expectation is listed first because it is the most urgent one for a successful search, and for conserving time and money. Veteran consultants have encountered boards which use an outside expert merely as window dressing to impress the local constituency. Members knew from the outset whom they intended to appoint, usually an insider, and employed the consultant to make it possible to announce, "We've searched nationwide for the best." Boards must level with the consultant on this point. Integrity is a very "fragile commodity." If a consultant gives his word that the search is "wide open," applicants ought to be able to count on it. The importance of integrity becomes apparent, too, as the board identifies problems of the school system and community which the new superintendent will face, and lets the consultant know about the contract conditions it is willing to negotiate.

The consultant also expects integrity from candidates, not only as to qualifications they claim, but also in their motivations for applying. Superintendents have been known to apply for better positions just to obtain leverage to use with their present boards.

The recruiting, screening, and hiring of a superintendent is too important for game-playing on anyone's part.

Sufficient Time

2. *Sufficient time to perform a thorough search*—There are no firm guidelines dictating the time span required for a comprehensive search, but obviously, within limits, the longer the better. The board and consultant are fortunate if the vacancy is known a year in advance. Five to six months is probably optimum for allowing all the recommended steps to unfold in quality fashion.

Because of emergency situations the available search time may be beyond the control of the board. If it is essential to have a new superintendent on site within a week or a month, it can be done if the board and consultant are willing to by-pass some recommended steps. When a board shortcuts the complete process it becomes even more crucial that a consultant be chosen who is close to the superintendency scene in the region and state.

Open Mind

3. *Open mind about candidates*—It is not easy for board members to retain an open mind about who should be selected as superintendent, but the consultant expects it. Everyone involved in the choice is likely to view candidates from a mind set about what the new chief should be—with the departing superintendent as the bench mark. If he or she has been highly regarded, then the board wants a carbon copy. If thought to be a failure, the board wants an opposite in nearly all characteristics.

A good consultant can help the board face the reality that no two superintendents are identical in qualifications or administrative methodology and that members must bridge the transition from the old to the

new. Members of a board that wants its money's worth from a consultant must keep open minds as they look at the candidates, and must listen to the consultant's advice.

Unanimous Board Decision

4. *Unanimous board decision in selecting the superintendent*—"Although differences of opinion should be prized in the operation of any public venture and although 'split boards' are commonplace today, board members should make an effort to present a united front in the vote for the final candidate. The new superintendent will inherit a difficult enough job in almost any district in the land. He or she should not be handicapped at the start of a new venture by the publicized indication of a governing body that appears divided upon whether he or she should even be there."

Some Enemies

5. *Consultant can expect to make some enemies*—The consultant can expect to make a few friends and a number of enemies from the experience. If there are 100 applicants and the board wants to interview six, there are 94 potential people who will dislike a consultant who has said in effect to each of the 94, "It is my judgment that you're not good enough to be the superintendent of X-Y-Z School District." Even five of the six finalists may have doubts about the consultant's support of their candidacies. A 99 to 1 disrespect for the consultant's opinion is no amicable path toward professional popularity.

Summary

A board of education's reticence toward using consulting assistance in the vital search for a new superintendent of schools can be alleviated by a better understanding of the roles and expectations of the three parties involved in the search—board, applicant and consultant.

A qualified search consultant can be expected to help the board in the development of specifications for the post, in locating the most promising candidates in an efficient manner, in objectively screening the applicants to a manageable number for board interviewing, in planning for an effective interview, and relieving the board of some of the criticism that will be heaped upon its members whatever its eventual choice.

The board cannot expect the consulting expert to actually name the superintendent, or to provide a 100% guarantee of choosing the right person—an impossibility for anyone in a complex public administration position like the superintendency. A competent consultant can be of significant help in reducing the chances for the board to err in its decision.

Applicants for the position can expect from the consultant objectivity in assessing each candidate, detailed information about the vacancy, news of progress in the district's selection process, and confidential treatment of their candidacies.

The consultant can properly expect integrity from both the board members and the applicants. He or she can urge, and at least hope for, a unanimous vote by board members on the final choices of a new superintendent, and can also expect to curry a share of antagonism in the performance of this sensitive task.

Appendix

(National headquarters of superintendents and boards of education for soliciting names of executive search consultants):

- American Association of School Administrators, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209. Telephone (703) 528-0700.
- National School Boards Association, 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007. Telephone (202) 337-7666.

Acknowledgments

The American Association of School Administrators wishes to acknowledge and thank the many people who were involved in developing this publication, including the late Robert Wilson of Kent State University, himself an experienced consultant, who prepared the original manuscript, the AASA Committee for the Advancement of School Administration (CASA), and the AASA Executive Committee.

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AASA also thanks the association staff, including Louis G. Zeyen, Deputy Executive Director, who acted as staff liaison with the committees, and Lolita English, AASA Administrative Assistant who coordinated the efforts of all. Final editing and production were under the supervision of AASA Associate Editor Judy Touchton and AASA Associate Executive Director Gary Marx.